



# CATAWBA COUNTY

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Public Health

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## **Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Helps Kids Develop A Healthy Appetite**

Children learn their habits, attitudes and beliefs from their parents and other caregivers, and that includes their willingness to try new and healthy foods. The American Dietetic Association (ADA) and Catawba County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) encourages adults to be good role models and teach children how to appreciate nutrition and enjoy healthful eating.

"The most important thing you can do is offer your children as many new foods as possible, as early in life as possible," says registered dietitian and ADA Spokesperson Sarah Krieger. "It takes much longer to accept new foods when you are older.

"It's amazing what kids will try," Krieger says. "Hummus, beans, tropical fruits – whatever is available locally in your area, you can get your kids to enjoy it."

"Involve your children in grocery shopping and meal preparation as much as possible," Krieger says. "Kids are more likely to try new things – especially fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products – if they are involved in choosing and preparing them."

A survey by the American Dietetic Association Foundation showed parents have more potential to influence their children's behavior, including their eating habits, than anyone else. In fact, parents outrank sports celebrities as the person the child "would like to be most," according to the survey. By eating healthy foods and offering them to your children, you can give your kids opportunities to learn to like a variety of nutritious foods.

"We love to see parents work with their children to make healthy food choices," explained Julie Byrd, Director for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program at Catawba County Public Health. "The WIC vouchers serve as a guide for parents and signify the most nutritious foods for growing children."

WIC is a federal supplemental nutrition program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for pregnant, postpartum, and breast-feeding women and infants, and children up to age five. The program provides food vouchers to redeem at participating food stores and farmer's markets for nutritional foods including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains milk, juice, eggs, cheese, cereal. WIC also provides counseling and education on proper nutrition and breastfeeding.

"There are small changes that can be made by parents including switching to low fat milk and dairy products. This change also helps to fight obesity and is a great change for the entire family," said Byrd.

To learn more about the WIC program or to see if you are eligible please call the WIC reception line at 828-695-5884.



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